Women in Utah Industry

Government data collectors such as the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) and the Census Bureau have, for many years, gathered information that has given us a reasonable view of the female labor force in Utah. These sources provide a picture of such things as the number of women working outside the home and the types of occupations in which they are employed. Up until now, however, very little was known about which industries employ Utah women; Local Employment Dynamics (LED), a marriage of BLS and Census data, fills that void.

Focusing on stable jobs only (jobs held by an individual for at least three consecutive quarters), the healthcare industry was the largest employer of Utah women in 2005; educational services and retail trade were second and third, respectively. These results are certainly not surprising as many pink collar occupations (e.g. nurses and tea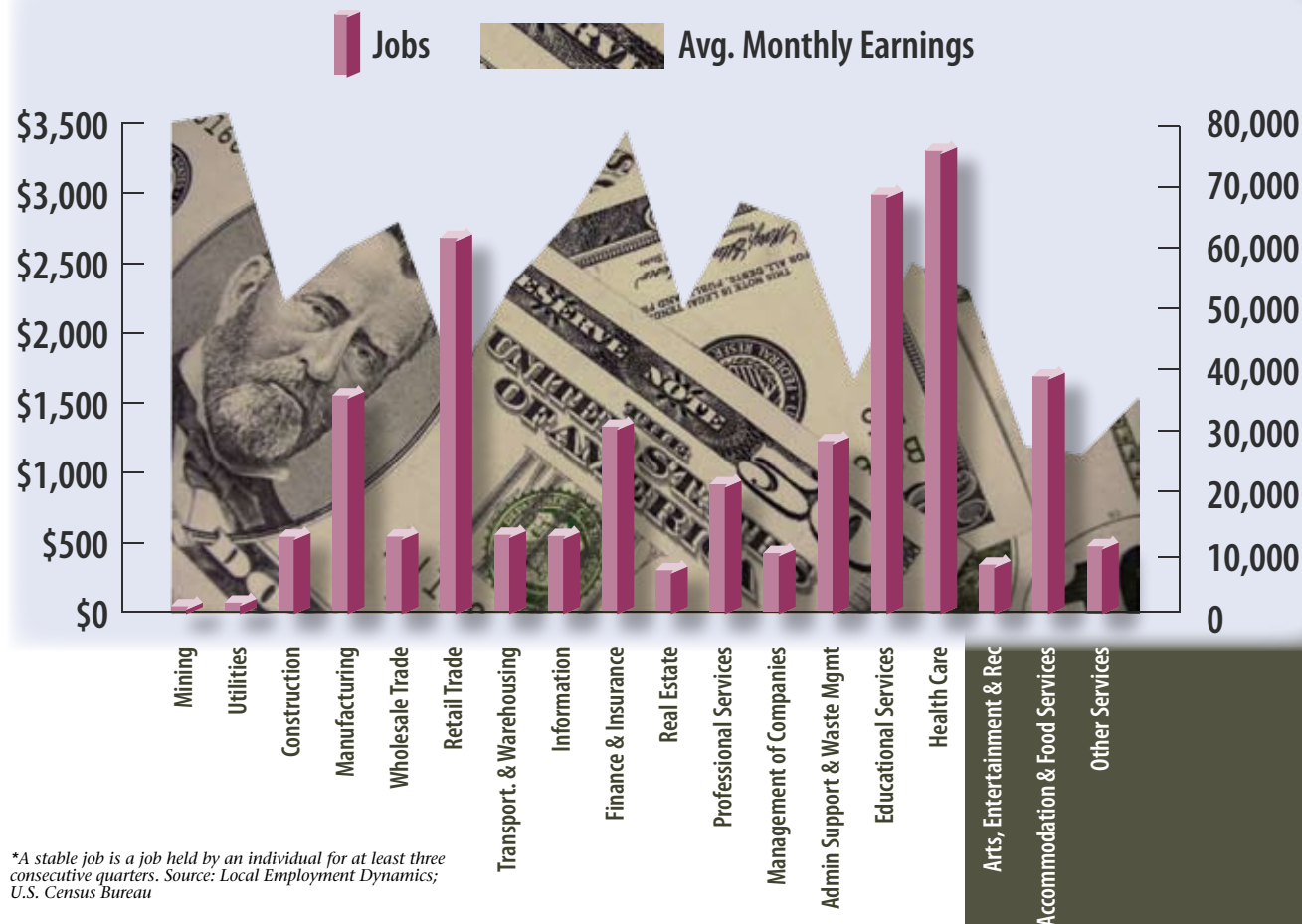chers) are heavily represented in these industries. While jobs in healthcare and educational services paid women more than the average female wage for Utah in 2005 (which is about $2,100 per month), retail trade wages were 26 percent below that average.

Women were least represented in the mining, utilities, and real estate industries. Low numbers in mining and utilities are not surprising based on traditional gender norms of the labor market, but are interesting in the fact that the average wages for the women currently in those industries are among the highest.

A relatively low number of female job holders in real estate is unexpected. This could be explained by the fact that LED data counts jobs that are covered by the unemployment insurance program. Many real estate agents are statutorily exempt from the unemployment insurance program and, therefore, would not be counted.

Female Stable Jobs* and Earnings
by Major Industry • Utah 2005

Jobs　　　Avg. Monthly Earnings

A stable job is a job held by an individual for at least three consecutive quarters. Source: Local Employment Dynamics; U.S. Census Bureau

Regarding wages, in what industries do women fall behind men the most? In 2005, the gender wage gap for stable jobs in Utah was largest in the finance and insurance industry. The second largest wage gap was in healthcare. In both of these industries the typical occupations are significantly disparate in the requisite training and education, which may explain the difference in wages. Also, LED data does not make adjustments for full- and part-time jobs, which could also explain the wage disparity.

Do younger women work in the same industries that older women do? In 2005, a majority of the youngest female job holders in Utah (14-21 years) worked in retail trade or accommodation and food services.

Healthcare is the most popular industry for women age 22-44, while education services is the most popular for the 45-64 age group. The difference in industry representation for younger versus older women in Utah is partly explained by the training level necessary for the most typical occupations in those industries.

LED provides a new dimension on which to evaluate women in the labor market, and although most results were not surprising, the data does support previously held beliefs about the shape of the Utah labor force.

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